



"Wie ist er schön und hehr zu schauen,
den solch' ein Wunder trug an's Land!"

LOHENGRIN, act i.

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Wagner as a Melodist.

By EDGAR F. JACQUES.*

BEFORE attacking the subject proper of my paper, I must ask you to allow me a few preliminary remarks of a negative kind.

Richard Wagner has so often had reason to bewail the '*too much zeal*' of his friends that this becomes all the more necessary when, as in my case, no pretensions are made to speak *ex Cathedra*.

* This paper was read by Mr Jacques at a meeting of the Wagner Society (London) on November 30, 1887.—ED.

The missionaries and teachers of Established religions are not allowed to propagate their faith till by examination they have proved their fitness for the task. With Wagnerians it is not yet so; and much of the open hostility shown towards Richard Wagner has undoubtedly been due to the fact that he has been held responsible for every statement made on the subject of his tenets by those whose knowledge and discretion were not proportioned to their good intentions. Since perhaps the same thing may be said of me I am anxious you should blame *me*, and me only, for any absurdity which I may include in my remarks this evening.

To begin with, the very title of my lecture is open to objection. It has been asserted (in print, mind you) that Wagner's music is *devoid* of melody altogether; and therefore to speak of him as a 'melodist' will to some recall the anecdote of that old sea-captain who, on being asked to describe the manners and customs of some savage races whom he had visited, wrote, after much consideration—"Manners: They ain't got none, and their customs is beastly."

Those, however, who can see or hear absolutely no melody in Wagner's works are not likely to be here in force to-night, so I may pass to another and more serious aspect of my title. I spoke just now of the unfortunate lack of an examining body from whom Wagner's disciples might derive authority. But, this notwithstanding, there is one thing upon which I fancy we all hold but one opinion: That Richard Wagner was something very much more than merely a great musician. Some apology is therefore due to the Wagner "*bund*" for speaking of the Master solely in his capacity of *musician*, nay, less still, of only one detail of the music: its melody. But the conception involved in our view of this great genius: not only as a poet, a dramatist and a musician, but as a philosopher, a critic, and the founder of an art-type which, were it adopted in its entirety, might do much towards purifying the whole of our social life, is far too vast, far too strange for the average mind to realise. To the great public of our cities Richard Wagner is still only a great opera-

writer. I allude now to those who have consented to regard him as '*great*' at all. The mass of our fellow-countrymen know him only as the Prophet of a small band of fanatics, who prefer myths and legends, fairy tales and symbolism, dragons, giants, dwarfs and swans, to sober fact and sensible dramatic fare; who, in music, prefer noise and incoherence to beauty and form; recitative to melody; and hate all tunes that can be retained by the ear. It is therefore *not* unnecessary to regard one aspect at a time of the many-sided genius of Richard Wagner; for only thus can his power be brought home to the outer barbarian who knows him not.

It has been said that the best argument for Wagner, is to let him be heard by adequate performances of his works, to let him speak *synthetically*—that *analysis* kills. The answer to this is: that not every ear is prepared to take in such strong food; not every mind is in touch with the dramatic-world revealed to us in Wagner's works. As Swinburne has said "I know nothing worse in the history of criticism, than the perversity even of eminent critics in persistent condemnation of one great artist for his deficiency in the qualities of another. It is not that critics of the higher kind expect to gather grapes of thorns and figs of thistles; but they are too frequently surprised and indignant that they cannot find grapes on a fig tree, and figs on a vine."

But it is not alone among outsiders that so many obstacles to comprehension exist (that perhaps is natural)—even among Wagnerians there is a vast diversity. The body of members ranges between extremes of Esoteric and Exoteric thought; from the adept whose studies lie in the direction of Metaphysics and Ethical Symbolism, to the comparative tyro, the neophyte who sees at present in Wagner only the originator of a new operatic form, or the creator of much beautiful music and a host of significant and lovely poetic individualities. Thus Wagnerians as a body reflect the immense range and versatility of Wagner himself, and must necessarily divide their labours as he himself did his, between *critical*, musical, poetic, dramatic and philosophical activity, trusting to time for the organic coherence of the whole.

To carry the simile still further: they must also try to prevent their analytical or critical utterances from damaging his cause. There can, I think, be little doubt that Wagner's critical and philosophical works are chiefly responsible for the bitter hostility shown towards him. Sir Joshua Reynolds says: "The highest genius proceeds in obedience to the highest law, and it is only because the majority of mankind are insensible to the limits of law that they impute the actions of genius to capricious inspiration." But it needs considerable talent to pull works of great power to pieces, unless we have a clue to their author's ideal. In Wagner's case accusations of 'capricious inspiration' would have availed little to retard the acceptance of his works. It was, on the contrary, that wonderful analytical power which enabled him to describe the progress of his own capacity, and to give a logical coherence to the narrative of his psychological development, which furnished his enemies with weapons. Depend upon it, had he not analysed and described the method by which his artistic nature worked and developed itself, few would have dared to assail him with such gutter garbage as was frequently flung at his devoted head. Robert Browning has, in another art, shown tendencies very similar (at least so it appears to me) to those seen in Richard Wagner's melody; and, though there are many who ruefully shake their heads at some of his verses, they usually assume that the obscurity lies quite as much with them as with him. Perhaps they remember Goethe's maxim "He who would reproach an author for obscurity, should look into his inner self, to see if all is quite clear there." But then Robert Browning holds aloof from theories; and *the mystery of silence has about it, always, an element of fear for fools*. Richard Wagner characteristically carried his heart on his sleeve, and thus enabled every booby to measure swords with him.

In January 1876, a remarkable article appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* entitled "Wagner and the modern theory of Music." Let me extract one passage: "A logical fallacy is apparent in Wagner's assertion, repeated still more authori-

tatively by his literary satellites, that so far from melody being cramped or interfered with by his system, it is greatly extended, and that his operas are in fact one succession and blending of melody from beginning to end. It is obvious that this is a mere arbitrary playing with language. *We all know what we mean by melody*, and if its essence be more easily felt than defined, we at least know that it is dependent on measured accent in time, as well as on measured intervals in pitch, for that symmetrical proportion which gives it an individual and recognisable form." Now if this means the regularity which is inseparable from music *to which a time-signature is appended*, the statement is obviously a truism, and could not be held as an attack on Richard Wagner's melody, since even his *recitative* is (almost without exception, I believe) written 'in time.' The recitative of Italian opera of course would be open to the objection that '*measured accent in time*' was not present. If, on the other hand, the Edinburgh Reviewer means that recurrence of groups of bars (technically known as *rhythms*), marked by measured accent in time of a similar character, is necessary to the existence of melody, we shall find that nothing is farther from the truth than the statement: "*we all know what we mean by melody*."

The statement that (*perhaps*) '*each of us knows what he means by melody*' might be nearer the truth; for as a matter of fact, easy to be verified by the 'anxious enquirer,' there is hardly any musical term the meaning of which is more variously interpreted. We are all, indeed, agreed that the part of a piece of music called its '*melody*' is the tune or air (as the old books have it) but the conditions which should attend its manifestation are by no means so unanimously recognised. . . .

I might, as I dare say you all know, go on for hours quoting the most conflicting opinions of writers on this subject. But the objections (save the mark) may be roughly classified thus. It is asserted (1) that Wagner never did write a genuine melody (they take care, of course, to avoid any explanation of what they mean by a genuine melody)—(2) that he *would* have done so,

but couldn't; and invented a theory to cover his deficiency (this is a great favorite)—(3) that he could, but wouldn't because he thought it wrong—(4) that he often did begin to write melodiously, but either couldn't or wouldn't keep it up—(5) that when he *did* write a melody, he spoilt it by his complicated, noisy and ugly accompaniments—(6) that he had a great gift for *melody*, but none for *form*, and consequently that it is not right to call his melody melody, as that term is exclusively to be reserved for tunes arranged on an already-existing plan—(7) that he was most inconsistent, because sometimes he wrote a perfect melody and at others did not, and that his music consequently is beautiful only when he stultifies himself.

On this subject, nothing is more hopeless, apparently, than the extreme disagreement between musicians. One man will say that a good deal of fine melody is to be found in *Rienzi*, the *Dutchman* and in 'some parts' of *Lohengrin*, but that after that it disappears. An ardent Wagnerite hears this, and asserts that so far from this being the case the later works are more melodious than the earlier—that as a matter of fact the most melodious of Wagner's works is *Tristan*. The other gives a howl, and they part in mutual contempt. These also have made the mistake of the Edinburgh Reviewer: "we all know what we mean by melody." They have both sinned in using terms without defining the meaning they attach to them. Had the anti-Wagnerite defined his thought, he would have said: "A melody is a series of sounds composed of small groups arranged symmetrically, and the accent and intervals of which are easily seized and remembered. The symmetrical arrangement consists of repetitions with alternation, as in the decorations of a room, or as we see it in versification, and the presence of all these things is to my mind necessary to the existence of melody, and when these are absent I say there is none."

It was similarly asserted, once, that there was no form or rhythm in prose. This fallacy arose from exactly the same error, of confounding a *species* with a *genus*. It is just as if one said,

"A quadruped is an animal: Man is not a quadruped: therefore man is not an animal."

On the other hand the Wagnerite who, when he has to deal with such a one, asserts roundly and *without qualification* that *Tristan* is more 'melodious' than *Il Barbiere*, is very much to blame, however justifiable the statement may be from the standpoint taken by his brethren of the '*Bund*.' It is not by such methods that any understanding can be arrived at. The dispute really hinges upon the different views held as to the primary use, meaning and function of Music itself. This difference, though long ago recognized in a vague sort of way, has during this century become more and more accentuated. It is not necessary to quote the innumerable definitions given of the word '*Music*' since books came to be written. It will be sufficient to take typical illustrations of the opposite views in question:—

According to Leibnitz, music is "a mysterious arithmetical calculation, made unconsciously by the soul."

The more poetic definition, that 'Music is frozen architecture,' expresses the same view.

The Pythagorean doctrine—which identifies musical intervals with the proportions observable in the universe—is a higher, but still much too limited explanation.

Of the opposite extreme we have excellent examples in those writers who, following J. J. Rousseau's 'dream' that ideal purity and sympathy are to be found only in the most primitive stages of Society (that the savage is the only *natural* man), have traced the origin of Music to the spontaneous utterances of human feeling. This view, though equally near the truth with the previous ones, is also, *when standing alone*, equally far from it. In the present day again we have seen a revival of the eternal battle between the '*Formalists*' and the '*Expressionists*'—in the writings of Dr Hanslick in Germany, Mr Edmund Gurney in England and Mr Charles Beauquier in France, on the one side; and on the other, such men as Darwin, Herbert Spencer and the author of *Music and Morals*—who deliberately states, in p. 7 of that work, that

"The harmonies of Nature are purely metaphorical. There is no music in Nature, neither melody nor harmony. Music is the creation of man," and so forth, which makes one wonder whether he has ever investigated the phenomena of acoustics, or heard the wailings of an Æolian Harp. Finally we come to a vastly superior explanation given by Schopenhauer: "Music stands apart from all the other arts. In it we do not recognise any imitation, any reproduction of an Idea of the things in the world; yet it is an art so surpassingly glorious, it acts so mightily upon the innermost being of man, is there understood so completely and profoundly, that we assuredly have in it more to look for than 'a mysterious arithmetical calculation made unconsciously by the soul' as Leibnitz held it to be. Yet Leibnitz was quite right inasmuch as he only considered its immediate and outward significance: its husk. Now from our point of view the significance of music is related intimately to the essential nature of the world and ourselves; and the numerical proportions—into which of course all music can be resolved—do not stand as the thing designated, but merely as the *symbol of the thing*."

"It is the end of all the Arts (except Music) to facilitate the cognition of Ideas by means of the representation of single things. But Music, as it ignores the Ideas, does not in the least depend upon the perceptible world; it ignores it unconditionally. Music is itself as complete an image of the Universal Will as the world itself is. Thus, as the world is an image of the Universal Will, so are the other arts images of the things in the world; but *music is an image of the Will itself*, without the intermediate imaging of the things in the world. The other arts speak of *shadows* only: Music speaks of *essentials*. As however the same *Will* shows itself in the ideas as well as in music, though in a totally different way, there must be an *analogy*—though by no means an immediate likeness—between Music and the Ideas whose appearances constitute this visible World."

The next steps in this theory appear, to me, weak and fanciful. The writer compares the mass of inorganic nature, the planet

itself, to the bass notes; and all the organic products, evolved later, to the upper (harmonic) notes; the highest to the world of plants and animals. The following is more relevant:—"In the high principal part (the *melody*) I would recognise the highest grade of objectivation of the will." In un-Schopenhauerian language this means the highest manifestation of the Creative power in Nature.

He goes on: "As man alone is gifted with understanding, and ever looks before and behind him on his actual path, similarly *melody* alone possesses a significant connection exhibiting a conscious design from beginning to end. Melody therefore tells the story of the Will in the light of Consciousness, revealing the most hidden history of the Will, painting each emotion, each endeavour, each movement, *and all that reason gathers together under the wide and negative conception of feeling, and which it can no longer grasp as abstractions.* Therefore is it that Music is called the speech of feeling and passion, as language is of reason. Now the essential nature of Man consists in this: that his will strives, is satisfied and strives again, and so on for ever. Nay his happiness and well-being consist of this only: that the transition from a wish to its satisfaction, and from this again to a new wish, should go on rapidly; for we know that the failing of that satisfaction produces suffering, just as the absence of a new wish produces longing, *languor, ennui.* And in accordance with this, the essentials of melody consist of a continuous deviation, swerving from the key-note in a thousand ways, not only to the nearest harmonic notes, but to every kind of chromatic interval, yet always followed in the end by a return to the starting-point. . . . But it is not to be forgotten that music has no direct, but only a mediate relation to such analogies; as it never expresses phenomena, but solely the inner being, the essence of phenomena, the Will itself. It expresses therefore not this or that particular joy, this or that sorrow, pain, horror, exultation, hilarity or repose of mind itself, but as it were *in abstracto* the essentials of these, without their concomitants, therefore without their motives. . . .

We may take the perceptible world or nature, as two different expressions of the same thing, which thing itself acts as mediator to the analogy between the two."

Schopenhauer himself admits the impossibility of proving this view of music; and of course it depends for its acceptance very much upon the reader's attitude towards Schopenhauer's views as a whole. To the materialist, the explanation will appear as so much '*bosh*.' And to thousands who, in large commercial centres call themselves Christians, but whose conceptions—not only of that religion itself, but of life altogether—are nevertheless of a more or less materialistic and conventional character, it will appear equally ridiculous and far-fetched. The nature of music must, it is evident, appear different to different classes of minds. Even those who—like Ruskin, Taine, Veron and others—have attempted philosophies of the *visual*, and therefore more material, arts, have failed to agree; it is therefore not astonishing that men should differ upon the subject of the essential nature of the least material of all the arts: Music.

To me Schopenhauer's explanation, I confess, appeals strongly, but only in the light of an *ultimate* explanation. The reason why one phrase should awaken or convey the concept of joy, while another conveys that of grief, is not explained, and can never be made clear to the world at large, by such transcendental theories.

The latest attempt (1885) to unravel the complex impressions derivable from Music, is that of Mr Rowbotham, whose history of music has so recently appeared that perhaps a résumé of the theory there put forth may not be unacceptable. Mr Rowbotham says: "Music is a Dualism. It is formed of the conjunction of two elements—the one purely musical, the other poetical—the one sensuous, the other spiritual or intellectual—the one owing its origin and development to instruments, and based on the mere animal delight in *Sound*, the other owing its origin and development to language, and based on the fusion of the emotional and intellectual sides of man's nature. The object which the Musical Historian must set before him, is to trace the goings on of these two elements, at first far apart and moving in separate orbits; to show how their

paths gradually approached each other, how a mutual attraction was set up, till at last they were necessarily drawn into the same plane of revolution. Here is the geniture of a new music.

"He must then go on to show how the union is so complete, that the instrument can lose its original characteristics and become the exponent of the poetical and spiritual side of the art, while the voice can in like manner be the interpreter of the sensuous and merely musical side. How the organs of utterance may for ever vary, but how *what* they utter never varies. How the sensuous and spiritual elements act, and react upon one another. How sometimes one, sometimes the other is lord of the conjunction, sometimes both are so exquisitely blended that we are tempted to exclaim 'Here at last is perfect proportion.' But further he must proceed to account psychologically for these epochs of preponderance and equilibrium. He must shew why some nations are naturally disposed to develop the sensuous element at the expense of the spiritual, and other nations to develop the spiritual at the expense of the sensuous. And finally he must show how these two elements of music answer to the two grand ultimate divisions of the human mind, and hence two great schools of artists sometimes shading off into one another, sometimes in direct antagonism, have ever existed, from the first glimmerings of the Art's history to the present time."

(To be concluded.)

Wagner's Letters from Paris, 1841.

V.

September 8, 1841.



NO one doubts that Summer-times are times superb. To be able to cast off all the studs, cravats, waistcoats and frockcoats—the hateful burden of a civic Winter; to lie down in the woods, and dream a thousand lovely things,—that's something to make life worth living,—and

who'll dispute it?—But ah! how insufferable are these summer-times in Paris! Dust and heat, fumes and hubbub, houses—seven stories high, and streets—seven feet across; bad wine—flat water; river-baths peopled with a thousand dirty *gamins*,—and, added to all, the satanically-narrow garments into which one is squeezed by hopeless Paris tailors! As compensation for these sufferings, bad stage-performances,—in the *Palais Royal* no DEJAZET, in the *Variétés* no AUDRY; no BOUFFE in the *Gymnase*—no RACHEL in the *Français*; no DUPREZ, no DORIS at the *Opéra*! If even the Parisian finds himself ill at ease in such a state of things, how much worse is it for a Correspondent! Happy the political reporter! from the perplexity in which he is plunged by the dearth of news and absence of all diplomatic action, he is helped-out by the lucky circumstance that the Paris journals, no matter what the pinch, are compelled to come out everyday. The mintings of the anguish of their hearts he may take in peace and circulate as sterling coin; for, with the citing of a few authorities, he knows that everyone in Germany will credit him. But as regards fine art, and suchlike beauteous things, one would have to do a little minting on one's own behalf, to be able to take-in others,—and that has its attendant hardships, particularly if one lacks imagination, a thing the German loses as a rule in Paris. Since, however, it would appear incredible to you, if I told you that absolutely nothing of note has happened in Paris since my last report, I will at least endeavour to avoid the reproach of engaging in a negative lie; and therefore I will not withhold my scanty spoil of mournful verities.

Of the splendid illumination of the *Champs-Élysées* for the July fête, in any case, you will have heard and read enough,—how could any political reporter let slip such an unquestionable truism? Of the grand display of waterworks at Versailles, this everyone can also tell you,—thus I am relieved from all necessity of entering on the specialities of the Paris public Summer; for, to my knowledge, beyond the illuminations and the waterworks, nothing whatever has happened this year in the streets—no

Revolution, no Berliozian Symphony. The little earthquake appears to have existed nowhere but in the letters which dwellers in the Rue and Faubourg Montmartre addressed to Herr ARAGO. People will have it, that this section of the inhabitants of Paris is a very exalted one, and actively inclined to a lugubrious species of romance; as ground of this idiosyncrasy one adduces a too ardent reading of the works of Paul de Kock and the "Journal des Débats." I cannot bring myself to believe that this is the real source.—

The chief theatre of this quarter is the Théâtre des Variétés. It has stayed quite un-molested by the earthquake, yet it continues to exalt the heads of its audience. The pieces which are performed here, are customarily of a very extravagant kind, and no theatre-poet has brought this mad farrago farther than Dumersan,* the author of "Canaille." His latest piece is called "*Un tas de bêtises*." This charming title prepared one, in itself, for all sorts of fooleries; for in "a heap of nonsense" each man is certain to find a morsel for himself. As a matter of fact, however, everyone was taken aback by the remarkable character of this piece: it was completely bare of any actual plot,—to say nothing of 'intrigue'; instead, there moved a mass of allegoric figures before the eyes of the spectator. Not one novelty of the day, not one half-and-half remarkability in the field of public life, but was personified and brought before us. The famous Artesian Well played one chief rôle: it was ushered-in by two Chinese, who, slumbering on their native soil, had been gathered by the penetrative bore-spoon and sucked-up through the centre of the earth, into the heart of Paris; on the journey they had been nipped by a sudden frost, which gave them so violent a shaking that they justly supposed the newly-noticed earthquake had been caused by it alone. Herr ARAGO is said to set but little store

* Dumersan, a very prolific playwright, commenced a translation of Wagner's *Liebesverbot* into French, for the Théâtre de la Renaissance, towards the end of 1839; but the whole thing came to naught, owing to one of the periodic bankruptcies of that establishment.—TR.

by this explanation. But the maddest of all was: the piece had actually no ending. I'm not sure what particular allegoric figure was strutting on the stage, when suddenly in the Parterre, and even in the Boxes, things began to stir; there, too, the actors had been allotted rôles, and from roof to floor, from seats to ceiling, they fell a-questioning and quarrelling with one another; with the natural result, that the attention of the audience was distracted from the stage and directed to the confederates among, below, and high above them. Just as this nig-nag was drawing near a close, we turned our eyes to the scene once more—the curtain had fallen without our noticing it. This piece was hissed off the boards.

Things are going very sadly with the Grand Opéra; its performances are becoming objectionable even to the *Claque*; the chief-claqueur is said to have demanded an enormous advance, without which he could not get his men to stick to their guns. That's the effect of these evil, evil Summer-times! In the summer a Parisian first singer thinks it beneath his dignity to sing at all; the second singers deem it not worth while to sing in tune. In such circumstances one gets performances like the last of the "Huguenots": nothing flatter and more exasperating can well be conceived.—As for the performances at the Paris Opéra in general, it is characteristic to note the difference between the first few and the later ones. With operas of great success, as even the "Huguenots" or the "Juive," the first twenty representations are customarily superlative;—a general enthusiasm prevails throughout the whole,—everyone outstrips himself,—even the faulty chorus does capitally:—but thereafter it's as though a line were drawn; everyone thinks he has done his share of work, and the stranger is to be pitied who comes to Paris with the idea of hearing one of those much-praised opera-performances, and cannot comprehend how what he hears and sees can ever have won applause. Then there rules the most amazing, almost intentional carelessness and indifference; and nowhere outside the Paris opera-house has one seen the conductor's odious

violin-bow fulfil its mournful office with such a swish and clatter.

Somewhat more brisk are matters at the Opéra Comique. Before one can turn one's wrist, behold you! there are novelties; and one-act operas * spring up like mushrooms from the earth. A short while since, the son of glorious Boieldieu tried fortune again with an opera of this kind: he had swathed himself with the first and second Acts of the "Dame Blanche"; they were the wings in power whereof he thought to soar on high . . . [*sic*]. Ah! what a burdening heirloom is a father's famous name!

But even at the Comic Opera do tragical events take place:—quite recently an opera-text of Scribe's brought one composer to the brink of the grave, and really thrust another into it. Think on't!—an opera-text, made by Scribe in two days!—What a crushing colossus must Scribe's genius be!—The facts are worth noting. There exists a composer, CLAPISSON by name; to him, by heaven's favour, was a Scribian textbook meted out. In accordance with a beautiful custom of the Parisian Directors, Clapisson had to pledge himself to deliver the finished score by a certain, hard-fixed day, on penalty of a fine of 20,000 francs. He gazed in wonder at the textbook, pondered things unheard, and conceived no less a notion than of composing an original music; then he fell into gloomy brooding on some comic scene or other, and grew ill. The Director stepped to the bedside of the haggard, wasted man, and resolved to save him from a certain death, inasmuch as he released him from his contract and took the fateful text away. Clapisson sprang to his feet, for very joy; composed two Quadrilles and a Romance; and grew *well* as a fish in water.—But, there existed another composer, and he was called MONPOU; on him fell the call of the elect. MONPOU had already made some daring flights to biblic regions, composed a "chaste Susannah"; there was the very man for getting through the job. In valorous mood

* So: the young-Italians have not even *invented* the one-act thing, nor the modern Germans the word for it, since Wagner here speaks of "*einaktige Opern*."
—Tr.

he took up Clapisson's engagements, and began to set Scribe's text to music. Yet the more he composed, the more *he*, too, was seized with rage to make original music,—he thought and thought,—no inspiration came! The unhappy wretch decided on a taste of ardent spirits,—he tasted,—pondered, and—fell ill! But to his aid there came not the Director,—the terrible text remained in his hands,—the contract weighed him down,—and he succumbed,—he died! Is this not a moving tale? If that sort of thing continues, Scribe will soon have murdered all the younger French composers;—since then, he is said to have handed-in eight full-blown opera-texts,—who is going to compose them?—

Finally the mortal text has been given to HALÉVY. This was the best way out of the difficulty; for, whoever sees HALÉVY's thickset body, his sturdy fist, may comprehend that Scribe's text will never do him hurt; soon we shall see the new opera, and learn where sat the mischief.

Further, we soon shall get a hearing of Halévy's newest grand-opera: "the Knight of Malta"; in advance we are assured that Mad. STOLZ has fourteen numbers to sing in it, and therefore has advised the composer to insist on a skilled physician being in constant attendance on the stage.

Much else is being prepared for. Herr ADAM is instrumenting GRÉTRY's "Richard Cœur-de-lion"; he himself declares that it is only a matter of a little brass, in which the good GRÉTRY was deficient, and yet without which no genuine "Lion-hearted" can well be thought. He has taken over the friendly care for this addition; presently we shall hear this work at the *Opéra Comique*.

Presently, also, the Italians will return; the Salle Ventadour is being dressed-out for them with gold, with silk and velvet;—presently they will sing, and—presently therefore you, too, shall have exhaustive news of all the wonders now making ready and soon to pass into fulfilment.

RICHARD WAGNER.

The "Lohengrin" Drama.

II.



IN my first article I cited a sentence from the '*Communication to my Friends*,' wherein Wagner calls the "myth of Lohengrin" a "genuine poem of the Folk."

Since this expression has both a general and a particular bearing, I will deal first with its general application, and, to that end, will adduce a few passages from his prose-writings where he lays down the connection between "Folk" and Art.*

The following may serve as introduction: "The true Folk-element the opera-composer had not the wit to grasp; to have done this, he must himself have worked in the spirit and with the notions of the Folk, *i.e.* have been himself a part and parcel of it" (vol. ii., p. 58). So that, within three years after the last touch was put to the score of *Lohengrin*, we have its poet-composer distinctly enunciating his creed that "Prince and Princess" must vanish from the centre of the operatic scene, and give place to a People set free from its earlier condition of a mere flock of sheep. —I am not about to contend that the real "emancipation" is fully carried-out in *Lohengrin*; but it is as well to note the remark in this association, since it is merely a riper development of the initial thought.—

To commence the series of plainer declarations on the broader subject, however, I offer the following: "Only by the Folk, or in the footsteps of the Folk, can poetry be really made" (vol. i, 134). Take next these remarks upon the "intellectual egoism" of artists who seek their subject-matter in intrigues of Court or Bourgeoisie: "They forget completely that in the days of national blood-brotherhood, which preceded the epoch when the absolute Egoism of the individual was elevated to a religion,—the

* As the following quotations are taken from the two volumes of "RICHARD WAGNER'S PROSE WORKS" already issued in English, I shall merely cite vol. and page, without naming the specific essay.—W. A. E.

days which our historians betoken as those of prehistoric myth and fable,—the Folk, in truth, was already the only poet, the only artist; that all their matter, and all their form—if it is to have any sound vitality—they can derive alone from the fancy of these art-inventive Peoples" (i., 207). Add to it: "That *Art* is not an *artificial* product,—that the need of Art is not an arbitrary issue, but an inbred craving of the natural, genuine, and uncorrupted man,—who proves this in more striking manner than just these Peoples? Nay, whence shall our 'uneasy spirit' derive its proofs of Art's necessity, if not from the testimony of this artistic instinct and its glorious fruits afforded by these nature-fostered peoples, by the great *Folk* itself?" (i., 89)—and we shall find in the next quotation a conclusion somewhat astonishing to those who have not grasped as yet the full drift of Wagner's tendency, particularly at this period. It runs: "Who, then, will be the *Artist of the Future*? The poet? The performer? The Musician? The plastician?—Let us say it in one word: the *Folk*. *That selfsame Folk to whom we owe the only genuine Art-work, still living even in our modern memory, however much distorted by our restorations; to whom alone we owe all Art itself*" (i., 205).

Again, we have: "a subterranean stream of genuine Folk's-artwork, flowing secretly, yet flowing ever" (ii., 127) and: "By its faculty of using its force of imagination to bring before itself every thinkable reality and actuality, in widest reach but plain, succinct and plastic shaping, the Folk therefore becomes in Mythos the creator of Art" (ii., 155). And finally I must give one longer reference, as it sums up the group of motives which led Wagner to seek among "the Folk," of olden time, for human documents:—

"Not ye wise men, therefore, are the true inventors, but the Folk; for Want it was, that drove it to invention. All great inventions are the People's deed; whereas the devisings of the intellect are but the exploitations, the derivatives, nay, the splinterings and disfigurements of the great inventions of the Folk. Not ye, invented *Speech*, but the Folk; ye could but spoil its physical beauty, break its force, mislay its inner understanding,

and painfully explore the loss. Not ye, were the inventors of *Religion*, but the Folk; ye could but mutilate its inner meaning, turn the heaven that lay within it to a hell, and its out-breathing truth to lies. Not ye, are the inventors of the *State*; ye have but made from out the natural alliance of like-needing men a natureless and forced allegiance of unlike-needing; from the beneficent defensive league of all a maleficent bulwark for the privileged few; from the soft and yielding raiment upon man's blithely moving body a stiff, encumbering iron harness, the gaud of some historic armoury. . . . But to you I turn . . . to offer you, with all the People's open-heartedness, the redemption from your egoistic incantations, in the limpid spring of Nature, in the loving arm-caresses of the Folk—there where I found it; where it became for me my art-instructor; where, after many a battle between the hope within and the blank despair without, I won a dauntless faith in the assurance of the Future" (i., 80, 81).

Now that I have given you an idea of Wagner's general meaning, when he called the "myth of Lohengrin" a "genuine poem of the Folk," I must touch, for a moment, on its real descent from popular traditions.

In an exhaustive article upon the "Lohengrin-legend" (*Bayreuther Taschenkalender* for 1894) Dr. Wolfgang Golther has given us most interesting details of all the component factors of the story, tracing them back to poems and romances of the Middle Ages, and far beyond. He tells us, however, that at the time Richard Wagner wrote his *Lohengrin*-drama, there can only have lain before him the thirteenth-century poem (by a Bavarian, or, as F. Müller considers, a nether-Rhineland) as edited and prefaced by J. J. von Görres; the "German Mythology" of Jacob Grimm; and the "German Sagas" of the brothers Grimm (Jacob and Wilhelm). The last-named (published 1816-18) is pretty familiar to all of us, from our nursery days, under the title of "Grimm's Fairy Tales," and is certainly a book both *of* the Folk and *for* the Folk. (Perhaps before this series of articles is concluded, I may find a convenient paragraph in which to follow Dr. Golther's

example, and trace these delightful chapters to their final transformation in Wagner's poem). With Görres and his hundred pages of more or less dry statistics (1813) I presume, in any case, you would rather not be troubled. But the "German Mythology" of Jacob Grimm (2nd ed. 1844) has so clearly been consulted often by the Bayreuth master, that I need no apology for one short quotation from its chapter on "Heroes":—

After devoting two or three lines to the story of Sceáf, Grimm says: "The medieval poems of the Netherlands and Lower Rhine are full of such legends of the sleeping lad, whose skiff a swan has piloted to the hard-put (*bedrängten*) land; and this swan-knight is drawn as coming out of Paradise, under the name of *Helias*, whose divine origin is past all doubt. Helias, Gerhart or Loherangrin, of the 13th century are identical with Scóf [i.e. Sceáf] of the 7th or 8th, however diverse may have been their outer trappings."

And now I have a little surprise in store; for the very earliest "Lohengrin" on record—this same Sceáf (or however else the name was inflected)—turns out to be one of our own nation's mythic heroes. On the authority of C. V. Müllenhoff and others, Dr Golther gives us his story as follows: "Among the Anglians, who once were settled in Schleswig, and crossed to Britain in the fifth century, there existed an old, old Saga, which connected the origin both of Kinghood and of Culture with the wondrous advent of a mysterious stranger. In a rudderless boat, and lying on a sheaf of corn, strewn round with arms and treasure, there floated once to land a helpless child. The people greeted him in wonder, and brought him up with care. They gave him the name of Skéaf [*sheaf*], after the bundle of grain whereon he had slept. Skéaf became King of the Anglians, and waxed in might and honour. But when he died, his lieges bore him to the waters' brink, as he had bidden. There lay his boat in readiness to bear him, and once more, with arms and jewels, sped the lifeless hero o'er the waves. No one knows whence he came, or whither he departed. But a glorious race of kings sprang from him. They say he was the lord of Heaven, himself, who came down in human form among

his people, and blest them with the gifts of settled dwelling, taught them the tillage of their fields, and dowered them with the Kingship sheltering life and tenure." Dr Golther tells us that this legend was not confined to the Anglians; and indeed it bears a strange resemblance to that Celtic group which goes to form the Arthurian cycle. Tennyson, though himself adopting a more prosaic tale of Arthur's birth, yet gives an inkling of the other versions when he says: "And there be those who deem him more than man, and dream he dropt from heaven"; again: "And near him stood the Lady of the Lake. . . She gave the king his huge cross-hilted sword, whereby to drive the heathen out. . . .

A voice as of the waters, for she dwells
Down in a deep, calm, whatsoever storms
May shake the world, and when the surface rolls,
Hath power to walk the waters like our Lord.
There likewise I beheld Excalibur
Before him at his crowning borne, the sword
That rose from out the bosom of the lake,
And Arthur row'd across and took it—rich
With jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt,
Bewildering heart and eye." . . .

His "*Passing of Arthur*" displays the kinship of these legends even clearer:

"Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me in the barge;'
So to the barge they came. There those three Queens
Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept . . .
And slowly answer'd Arthur from the barge:
'The old order changeth, yielding place to new' . . .
So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan." . . .

And Sir Bevidere, watching the hull's "black dot against the verge of dawn," saw

"Or thought he saw, the speck that bare the king,
Down that long water opening on the deep

Somewhere far off, pass on and on, and go
From less to less and vanish into light."

All the poetry of this "*Passing of Arthur*" is summed up in those last four lines; and here we find the two main races of our nation sharing between them a legend common also to all Aryan dwellers on the coast. As Wagner himself has expressed it: "One primal, manifold-repeated trait runs through the Sagas of those peoples who dwelt beside the sea or sea-embouching rivers: on the blue mirror of the waters there draws nigh an Unknown-being, of utmost grace and purest virtue, who moves and wins all hearts by charm resistless; he is the embodied wish of the yearner who dreams of happiness in that far-off land he cannot sense" (i. 336). The mountain-folk have their gnomes and spirits of the peak, their wonder-land that lies beyond the ridge; the coast-folk have their spirits of the wind and mist, and far across that flat expanse of waters lies for them the happy land. One needs but go down to the sea-shore when the sun is setting, to feel how true was the instinct that bid these coast-dwellers sing of heroes vanishing across the waves to some far-distant, glorious bourne; one needs but see the sun rise on the waters' brim, to sympathise with Folks who fabled of some radiant hero, decked with gems and armed with shining weapons, sent to battle with the powers of darkness. The Immensities have always touched the hearts of unspoilt peoples; and from out the great immensity of Ocean, did "the Folk" once draw this tale of Sceáf or Lohengrin.

Now let us see what part our author has allotted, in his new Folk's-poem, to the Folk itself. It is something other than the rôle assigned to earlier operatic Choruses, something beyond his treatment of the Chorus in the *Flying Dutchman* and *Tannhäuser*. We find the choir in an advanced stage of disintegration—i.e. of *differentiation*—preparatory to its passing disappearance, as such, in the *Ring des Nibelungen*, and its re-emergence in the marvelously changeful groupings of *Die Meistersinger*. But I am not going to deal with the divided harmonies and counterpoint: in

fact, the mere *technical* side of Wagner's music always seems to me a consideration to be completely set aloof—except on the rarest occasions—when dealing with his *dramas*. I shall simply glance at the words put into the mouths, and the motives placed in the hearts, of this Brabantian People.

We are struck at once by the fact that this Folk is heart-and-soul with Elsa: nay more, it is Elsa's *better* nature, the "spirit of perennial instinct"; so that we might almost invert Richard Wagner's expression, when he calls Elsa "the spirit of the Folk," and call the Folk '*the soul of Elsa*.' Yet it is obvious that Wagner has applied this expression simply to the *trusting* Elsa, since he had also called Hans Sachs, not many pages earlier, a manifestation of this "spirit of the Folk." And Hans Sachs, himself, in the *Meistersinger*, gives us the key to the whole combination—with his: "der Frauen Sinn, gar unbelehrt, dünkt mich dem Sinn des Volks gleich werth," he holds a sympathising, linking hand to Maid and Folk.

I have already given (No. xxv) the Folk's first exclamation at Elsa's approach; but the whole way through they are on her side, that is, upon her *better* side. When the King interrogates her as to the crime whereof she is attainted (the murder of her brother), the People, watching anxiously her silent deprecation, whisper to each other: "Wondrous! how strange her mien!" They cannot couple guilt with such a look of patient innocence. Then, as she begins the recital of her vision, they softly question one another: "Dreams she? Whither steals her sense?" The King and all the People (for Wagner always painted King and Folk as brethren) pray Heaven to "give them insight whose the guilt"; but the Nobles (whom Wagner ever held for interlopers twixt King and People) declare that none of *them* will take arms against the usurper, Frederick of Telramund.

The herald cries his challenge; the people listen eagerly for some knight to take it up; but, in their own words, "Un-answered dies the sound away; her cause stands now in sorry case." Once more the challenge goes forth, once more unanswered; the people

begin to lose all hope: "in fearsome silence judgeth God!" But scarcely has Elsa concluded her succeeding prayer to Heaven, than one by one, the people spy-out in the distance the glinting armour of her knight; it is *they* who are the first to sight him, *they* the first to cry: "our eye is blinded by such light," and *they* the first to greet the hero on the shore. Then, when Lohengrin has sped back his winged companion to those far-off regions whence he came, the men and women, "deep-moved and in the softest whispers," break out with: "What blissful awe is this that stills us! What sweetest power holds us bann'd! How beauteous is the sight that fills us, that wonder such hath brought to land!" Thenceforward naught can shake their faith in Lohengrin: "Ne'er more shall this our country see a hero like to thee!"

They will hear nothing of questions "Whence?"—this Folk. In the Second Act, Ortrud taunts Elsa with not even "knowing the name" of this champion of hers; but the People will have none of it: "'Tis blasphemy! Shut to her mouth! . . . To slander *him*, how durst she dare?" Elsa turns to them, and asks "Now ye be judge, which of these twain was pure at heart?"—They answer, with one voice, "But *he*! But *he*! Thy knight alone!" Presently Friedrich appeals to them to hear his plaint: "Away!" they cry, "you rush on death, man!" He persists in his appeal; their only reply is, "Seize ye the madman! Hark! He scoffs at God!" Friedrich drags on the plea of ancient precedent, that those who fight in "lists of God" must give their lineage, birth and standing; for a moment King and Folk (with voice united as before) are sore beset: "How will he answer?" But Lohengrin replies by pointing to his own "good *deed*" of rescue; and, though Elsa begins to waver beneath this hail of blows directed at her faith, the People hold firm in their allegiance: "We stand by *thee*; and never shall we rue it, that we have known in thee a knight unblamed. Reach us thy hand, in loyalty we sue it; for fair must be thy birth, though *never named*!" And the Act closes on a burst of gladness from the Folk: "See, see! Our knight from Heaven sent!—Hale to him! Hale to Elsa of Brabant!"

In the second section of the Third Act, when Elsa has bent before the storm of doubt, the People's faith stands staunch as ever. Lohengrin appears before the King, announcing that he cannot lead his men to battle; "Help God!", they cry, "how hard a word he speaks!" Lohengrin tells the cause, his wife's distrust; "Elsa!" with one accord they say, "how couldst thou thus offend?" He goes on to tell how *now* he is compelled to answer; they cry, "O, could he but the tidings spare!" But the Gral's edict is inexorable; Lohengrin must unveil his name and sending. Dazed for an instant by the wondrous tale, the King and People are the first to find a voice: "And must thou leave us lone, alack! thou glorious, God-appointed man? If Heaven take its blessing back, how find we solace for thy ban?" When all is over, when Elsa lies inanimate upon the shore, once more it is the Folk whose eyes reflect the latest glimmer of Heaven's messenger.—

But Elsa, the "spirit of the Folk"—I have treated her with little courtesy, you may say! In my next article I must make her full amends; for Elsa is among the sweetest, and most human, of Richard Wagner's women.

WM. ASHTON ELLIS.

Liszt's Letters.

* * * "*Letters of Franz Liszt*, Collected and edited by La Mara; translated by Constance Bache."—London: H. Grevel & Co., 33 King Street, Covent Garden, W.C., 1894. Two volumes. Crown 8vo, cloth. £1 4s.



AN extremely interesting collection of Franz Liszt's letters (some written in German, some in French) was published by Breitkopf und Härtel about a year ago, the result of La Mara's (Frau Marie Lipsius) loving care and patient research. Copious notes and an exhaustive "Register of Names" were added by Liszt's biographer, the lady editor, and, in fact, almost everything was done that could be done, to make the volumes a really valuable record. In our issue (No.

xxii) for May 1893 we drew attention to the fact that an English translation by one of our Members, Miss Constance Bache (sister to the late Walter Bache, who with Julius Cyriax may be said to have been for years the very backbone of the London Wagner Society) was in course of preparation. At that time we expressed a wish that the forthcoming English index "should go beyond that of the German edition . . . by citing the many passages referring to Liszt's *own* works." That this has not been effected, is really the only fault we have to find with the excellent reproduction now lying on our desk, for Liszt's own modesty with regard to his creations ought not to form a precedent for his chroniclers; but, no doubt, the heavy costs attendant on a publication so admirably 'turned out' as this, precluded the additional expense; and I may add that, as it is, the "Index of Names" runs into sixteen pages, double columns. This one fact is a sufficient guide to the book's value, for there are over nine-hundred contemporary persons dealt-with in these references, and over two-hundred of them are recipients of the letters themselves. The work thus forms a virtual *vade mecum* through the art-history of half a century: for instance, if one wants to know a little more of Anton Rubinstein, of Saint-Saëns, of Sophie Menter, of Peter Cornelius, of Franz Brendel, of Berlioz, of Robert and Clara Schumann, etc., etc., one has only to turn to this Index, and one may trace a considerable curve of their career. It has been objected (I am not sure whether by more than one critic) that a good many of these letters might well have been omitted: for anyone bent on reading the volumes straight through, from cover to cover, we can understand the objection—there *is*, of course, a lack of continuity of subject-matter; but such a defect is inseparable from the book's good qualities; whilst, on the other hand, it is amply counterbalanced by the picture thus given of Liszt in many moods. In the *Wagner-Liszt* correspondence—to say nothing of Richard Wagner's letters taking the lion's share of space—we saw little of Franz Liszt save on the profoundly earnest side; here we find him in every shade of temper, though never in a bad one;

even the puns, albeit somewhat too profuse for modern ears, and never meant for publication, shew the lighter touches in a character as true as steel. No one can read this collection of letters without feeling an intense admiration for the man who stretched out a helpful hand to everyone, be it individual or art-union, that needed his assistance. Written for none but private eyes to read, these letters deserve a lofty place in public literature, as shewing how a 'man of the world'—let Mrs Grundy do her worst—can set a shining example to many of its so-called 'saints.'

To Richard Wagner there are over a hundred references, besides one tiny note and its answer. We will not spoil the humour of the interchange by extracting the latter from their setting; but in *this* journal we may well be expected to devote a page or so to the former. Letter 58, "To Belloni (?)," is the first that touches on the Bayreuth master: a foot-note is appended, stating that "according to Wilhelm Tappert, a Belgian musical paper pronounced it spurious, for reasons unknown to the former" (i.e. W. T.). It is a pity that there should be *any* doubt—however unfounded—on this point, for the letter is dated "Weimar, May 14th, 1849," and starts by saying that Wagner "has been here since yesterday." In any case, however, we may reasonably take the *date* of Wagner's arrival at Weimar, on his 'flight from Dresden,' as genuine; and we thus have barely three days now left unaccounted for, between the evening of May 9th, when he was seen at Freiberg—on the *general retreat* from Dresden—and his arrival at Liszt's sheltering door.

Within a month from that disputed letter, we have an undisputed one to Schumann, in which Liszt is "expecting tidings from him [R. W.] daily from Paris, where he will assuredly enlarge his reputation and career in a brilliant manner." Though not a true prophet in the matter of Paris (at that time) Liszt here shews unmistakably his keen appreciation of a genius then but little heard of in the outer world. Thenceforth his voice is raised aloud in honour of his new-found friend. Thus in August, 1853 (Letter 103) we have: "At the beginning of July I enjoyed several

Walhalla-days with Wagner, and I praise God for having created such a man"; in April '55, he writes to Anton Rubinstein about Schumann's *Genoveva*, saying: "Among the operas which have been produced during the last fifty years it is certainly the one I prefer (Wagner excepted—that is understood)"; and constantly we have phrases to the same effect, shewing how unapproachable a place Liszt gave to Wagner's works.

See, again, how religiously Liszt treasured Wagner's letters to himself, and compare his reverence with the sacrilegious treatment meted out two years ago to a letter written by Wagner, within a week of this, to another man! Liszt writes to August Kiel on September 8, 1855: "I am going to see Wagner, and I promise to send you from Zurich a little autograph from his hand. I would gladly satisfy your wish sooner, but that the letters which Wagner writes to me are a perfectly inalienable benefit to me, and you will not take it amiss if I am more than avaricious with them." One can well imagine the horror of Franz Liszt, if he had been told that a collection of Wagner-letters would some day suffer *re-translation* (into indifferent German), alteration, interpolation, *et id genus omne*.

The visit, here looked forward to by Liszt, had to be deferred until the autumn of the *next* year (1856); it is probably to *it* that Liszt refers in a letter from which we think opportune to quote, in view of a recent revival of the old, old story of the faults being all on *Wagner's* side in his somewhat unhappy first marriage. Liszt was a pretty good judge in such matters, and this is what he writes in October 1863: "At our first meeting I thought I should meet her again.* It was at Zurich at Wagner's, whose powerful and splendid genius she so deeply felt. During several weeks she always took my arm to go into the *salle à manger* at the hour of dinner and supper,—and she spread a singular charm of amenity, of sweet and conciliatory affection in that home to which a certain exquisite degree of intimacy was wanting."—

* The reference is to Emilie Ritter, sister of Carl and Alexander Ritter.—Ed.

For a moment we must turn to Liszt's opinion of Wagner's detractors. In Letter 180 (vol. i) of March 1857, he writes to his nephew, Eduard Liszt (the recipient of some of the deepest and most interesting letters in the whole collection): "As I had previously said to you, the *doctrinaire* Hanslick could not be favourable to me; his article is perfidious, but on the whole seemly." Of Joachim Raff he had previously said, in a letter to F. Brendel, of August '54: "Raff's book, '*die Wagner-Frage*' has arrived here to-day, and I have already read it. The author is so pleased with himself, that it would be a miracle if his readers were joined to him in the same proportion, and Raff is specially at variance with *miracles*.—This book makes on me the effect of a pedagogic exuberance. Even the occasional good views (on harmony, for example) that it contains, are obscured by a self-sufficiency in the tone and manner of them, of which one may well complain as insupportable. What Raff wishes to *appear* spoils *four-fifths* (to quote the time which he adapts so ridiculously to *Lohengrin*) of what he might be. He is perpetually getting on scientific stilts, which are by no means of a very solid wood. Philosophic formulas are sometimes the envelope, the outside shell, as it were, of knowledge; but it may also happen that they only show empty ideas, and contain no other substance than their own harsh terminology. To demonstrate the rose by the ferule may seem a very scientific proceeding to vulgar pedants; for my part it is not to my taste; and without being unjust to the rare qualities of Raff's talent, which I have long truly appreciated, his book seems to me to belong too much to the domain of moral and artistic pathology, for it to help in placing questions of Art in their right light.—I beg you, dear friend, not to repeat this to *anybody*, for I could not go against Raff in any but the most extreme case, for which I hope he will not give me any occasion."

We have quoted this criticism at length, since it shews the sound good sense of Liszt, in many lights, and contains lessons that might well be laid to heart by *both* sides of those engaged—even now—in discussing the "Wagner-Question"; moreover it

is one of the very few occasions on which we find Franz Liszt in the attitude of an active antagonist. Polemics, as a rule, were strenuously avoided by him, and indeed his essentially gentle nature was far more prone to praise too much, than blame at all.

A very characteristic trait of Liszt's nature is exhibited in Letter 311 (vol. ii), of November, 1882. Writing to Mdme. Tardieu, he says: "To the kind remarks which the *Indépendance* has inserted on the concert of the 23rd October with the Liszt programme, I add the observation that the real title of my 'Transcription' of the Rakoczy March should be—*Paraphrase symphonique*. It has more than double the number of pages of Berlioz's well-known one, and was written *before* his. From delicacy of feeling for my illustrious friend I delayed the publication of it until after his death; for he had dedicated to me his orchestral version of the Rakoczy, for which, however, one of my previous transcriptions served him, chiefly for the harmonisation, which differs, as is well known, from the rudimentary chords usually employed in the performance of the Tsiganes and other little orchestras on the same lines. Without any vanity I simply intimate the fact, which any musician can verify for himself."

Our next quotation is from a letter (No. 314, vol. ii) to Baron Wolzogen, written November 24, 1882, while Liszt was at Venice *with* Wagner and his family; it deserves to be framed and hung up in the meeting-rooms of every 'Wagner Society' throughout the world—"Wagner is perfectly within the truth when he says that without the extraordinary munificence of H.M. the King of Bavaria the performances of *Parsifal* [i.e. the *first* year] would have been endangered, and only the sympathy of the public, outside the Wagner societies, [has] made the continuance of them possible. But does it follow from this that the Wagner Societies are useless, and that this is the opportunity for disbanding them? To my thinking, No, for they keep up a wholesome agitation, and support the '*Bayreuther Blätter*,' which essentially promote the good cause. There does not seem to me to be any advantage in changing the name *Society* (*Verein*) into *Fellowship*

(*Genossenschaft*). Wagner's great name and most important personality are what are most needed here. Moreover the *parliamentariness* of the Societies will not be averse [? "opposed"] to the absolute authority of the creator of so many immortal works. In merely minor matters variety of opinions may be made apparent; in all essentials we are really and truly one. On this account I desire the continuance, consistency, and increasing welfare of the Societies.—It goes without saying, that Wagner must reign and govern as legitimate monarch, until the complete outward realization of his Bayreuth conception—namely, the model performance of his entire works, under his own *ægis* and directions at Bayreuth."

We draw particular attention to the words, "his entire works," since so many ultra-Wagnerites have objected to *Lohengrin* being given this year at Bayreuth, just as three years ago they objected to *Tannhäuser*, and since this letter may be taken as conveying almost the *dying* wish of Richard Wagner. He himself has been taken from us; Liszt has been taken from us; but a *duty* still remains. That "duty" is the same as what Liszt gives voice to in a letter of December, 1884—again to Hans von Wolzogen—"To include me in your noble, zealous, high-minded efforts in matters for the glorification of Wagner and according to the wishes of his widow, is to me ever a duty and an honour."

Our final extract must be from Liszt's 'testament,' written September 14th, 1860:—"Among our Art-comrades of the day there is one name which has already become glorious, and which will become so ever more and more—Richard Wagner. His genius has been to me a light which I have followed—and my friendship for Wagner has always been of the character of a noble passion."

One word in conclusion, to thank Miss Bache for the really capital translation; the mere physical labour, alone, must have been no light undertaking. Her English is thoroughly readable, as may be seen from the textual extracts given above.

NOTES.

Some—in fact, *much*—apology is needed, for the extreme lateness of the issue of this Number. My readers will discover the reason, for themselves, if they will only turn to the columns of an esteemed weekly contemporary, the *Musical Standard*, beginning with its issue for February 24 of this year, where they will see that a *very* important Wagnerian task has thrown my regular work considerably behindhand. From the date just-named to April 7th, I was busily engaged in collating evidence on the serious question of the late Ferdinand Praeger's mutilations etc. of Wagner's letters, and so-called letters, to himself, and in contributing to that paper a series of articles thereon (I may say at once that the mere *bulk* of the matter made it impossible to deal with in *The Meister*). On April 7th I had hoped that my task was over; but "*l'homme propose et la femme dispose*"—on the 14th of that month a challenge was sounded by this author's widow, and from April 21 to May 5 a "Reply" forthcame, from Madame Praeger. This, of course, involved an immense amount of extra labour—the collecting of fresh evidence on disputed points, etc., etc.—for my "Rejoinder," which was published from May 12th to 26th (Mr H. S. Chamberlain having meanwhile disposed of some of this lady's charges, on May 5). I cannot go *properly* into the matter in a few lines; therefore I will commend the whole series, "Reply" and all, to my readers' most earnest attention, as it removes a very black stain from Wagner's memory. In the issue for June 2nd the editor of the *Musical Standard* gives his "summing-up," and, though I amicably demur to one or two of his conclusions, I thoroughly agree with many of them, particularly with these closing words of his: "we reluctantly have had to come to the conclusion that *Wagner as I knew him* is so full of inaccuracies in every respect that in the interest of the master himself it should be withdrawn at once from circulation."—I may add, without fear of being accused of a 'friendly puff,' that the office of the *Musical Standard*

is at 185 Fleet Street, London, and the paper's price is 1d. weekly (back numbers over a month old, 2d.)—

WM. ASHTON ELLIS.

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We hear that the London booking for the Bayreuth Festival is larger than in any previous year, upwards of 5,000 seats having already been sold here. From Bayreuth, on the other hand, we are informed that, on the *whole* number of applications, *Lohengrin* stands behind *Parsifal* and *Tannhäuser*. Now, precisely the same disfavour was shewn toward the last-named work *before* its Bayreuth production; surely people are not going to fall into the same mistake again! We strongly urge them to make up for lost time, as the Bayreuth *Lohengrin* (with Van Dyck and Nordica) promises to be phenomenal, and, at the very least, will be quite a different *Lohengrin* to any ever heard before; we have all seen what was done for *Tannhäuser* in 1891—an entire re-birth—and may anticipate the results of the same care with its successor.

In London, too, we are to have a short Wagner season, this month (June) at Drury Lane. *Tristan*, *Siegfried* and *Die Walküre* are talked of, with Alvary and Klafsky; but the announcements will probably be 'out' before the present lines.

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We have received for review, Kufferath's "*Tristan et Iseult*" (Paris: Libraire Fischbacher); a reprint of Alfred Forman's well-known English version of the "*Nibelung's Ring*" (Schott & Co.)—a work too fine to need our praise; "*The story of Richard Wagner's Tristan und Isolde*" by S. Fraser Harris (Dundee: Paterson, Sons & Co.); an admirable French translation of Wolzogen's "*Guide*" to *Tristan*, by Charles C. (Fischbacher); a "*Funeral March and Dirge*" by Wm. Platt, a Member of the Society (Weekes & Co., London); and Miss J. L. Weston's verse-translation of the first half of Wolfram von Eschenbach's "*Parzival*" (London: David Nutt). In our next issue we hope to review the books first- and last-named; the latter, in particular, appears to be a work of great importance.